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**Notice of Completion of Inventory of Native American Human Remains and Associated Funerary Objects From the Dorchester Burials of Marlboro, MA**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

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Notice is hereby given in accordance with provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3003(d), of the completion of the inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects from the four Dorchester burials of Marlboro, MA, now housed at the R.S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA 01810. Representatives of culturally affiliated Indian tribes are advised that the human remains and associated funerary objects from the Dorchester burials will be retained by the museum until August 16, 1992, after which they may be repatriated to culturally affiliated groups.

The detailed inventory and assessment of the human remains and associated funerary objects from the Dorchester burials was made by Dr. Michael F. Gibbons, Jr. of the Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA, in consultation with representatives of the Nipmuc Tribal Council. Osteological documentation of the remains indicates they are Native American. All four burials were found within the boundaries of the 17th century Indian Praying Town of Okommakamesit. The four burials appear to have been closely related, both spatially and culturally; all were extended, supine, and interred in coffins with no associated funerary objects, save nails, hinges, locks from the coffins. These traits are consistent with data from other Praying Indian mortuary sites in Massachusetts. The location and mortuary treatment argue strongly that these individuals were associated with the Okommakamesit Praying Town.

Cultural affiliation is difficult to determine for the occupants of the Praying Towns. Due to tremendous population loss and mixing during the 17th century, the cultural affiliation of the residents was not clear even at the time this Praying Town was occupied. Based on available sources, however, Nipmuc is the most appropriate tribal group. It is the considered opinion of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs that the Nipmuc are the most appropriate claimants.

Representatives of any Indian tribe believed to be culturally affiliated with the human remains and associated funerary objects from the Dorchester burials that have not been consulted should contact James W. Bradley, Director, Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Phillips Academy, Andover MA 01810, (508) 749-4490, before August 16, 1992.

Dated: July 6, 1992

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